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TELEVISION FOR CHILDREN

Ralph Garry and Others

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A PROBLEM AREA?

Much has been written and much has been said about television programs for children — written and said often with much inadvertent controversy. This issue of the JOURNAL presents in admirably brief form the judgment of thoughtful people who have been engaged in serious deliberation about television for children over a long period of time. We believe it to be a distinct contribution to an area in which there has not been enough clear thinking.

Ralph Garry is Associate Professor of Education in Boston University School of Education, and has been a member of its faculty since 1950. His particular concerns are educational psychology and guidance at the elementary school level. Since the inception of the Foundation for Character Education, he has participated in carrying out the projects selected by the Foundation Trustees. *Television for Children* is the first major project. The original statement was addressed to broadcasters. Through the pages of the JOURNAL it is now made available to an audience of educators.

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TELEVISION FOR CHILDREN

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PREFACE

THIS PUBLICATION *Television for Children* is the outgrowth of a conference which the School of Education of Boston University organized for the Foundation for Character Education in 1954. Once the trustees of the Foundation had arrived at a decision to undertake a program concerning television and its influence upon children, the program possibilities seemed so varied that a planning conference appeared desirable. Thirty-four participants chosen for their background of experience, their present work, and their interest in the project, were invited to a three-day planning conference. The participants included (1) representatives of commercial and educational television experienced in children's programs both at station and network level, (2) school personnel from several excellent New England school systems who were experienced in child development, school services, and curriculum development, (3) representatives of national organizations interested in education and child development, and (4) social scientists and professional educators experienced in research and educational planning in the fields of child development and mass communication.

Of the many recommendations evolving from the planning conference, one was the preparation of a publication which would provide criteria and suggestions for children's television programs. Both the authors and the trustees of the Foundation for Character Education hope this publication fulfills that intent. Although all of the authors would not subscribe with equal enthusiasm to all the views expressed (especially if taken out of context) the material nevertheless represents a consensus of the judgments of a group chosen not only for their obvious qualifications on the topic but as much for their diversity of experience.

Boston University and the trustees extend their appreciation to the following participants in the planning conference for the time and effort they so generously gave and for the recommendations which were developed, several of which are in the process of being fulfilled.

Gloria BAUER, *Station WGBH, Boston, Mass.;* Gertrude BRODERICK, *United States Office of Education, Washington, D. C.;* Gloria CHANDLER, *Station KING-TV, Seattle, Washington;* Linwood W. CHASE, *School of Education, Boston University;* Lawrence CONRAD, *Montclair Teachers College, Montclair, N. J.;* Martha GABLE, *Board of Education, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;* Richard GOGGIN, *Educational Television and Radio Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan;* A. W. HARDING, *Market Analysis Dept., General Mills, Minneapolis, Minn.;* Dale HARRIS, *Institute for Child Welfare, University of Minnesota;* Luella HOSKINS, *Association of Junior Leagues of America, Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York;* Grace JOHNSON, *American Broadcasting Company, New York;* Joseph KLAPPER, *Bureau of Applied Social Science, Columbia University;* William KVARACEUS, *School of Education, Boston University;* Mrs. Ramon LAWRENCE, *National Congress of Parent Teachers Association, Jericho, Vermont;* Nat MACCOBY, *School of Public Relations and Communications, Boston University;* Sue MARTIN, *National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters, Washington, D. C.;* Nancy MAZUR, *Research Department, American Broadcasting Co., New York;* William PARRISH, *National Broadcasting Company, New York;* Leonor RICH, *Winchester Public Schools, Winchester, Mass.;* Frieda SEIGEL, *Kindergarten, Winthrop, Massachusetts;* Dallas SMYTHE, *Division of Communications, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois;* Elizabeth SPEIDEL, *Manchester Public Schools, Manchester, N. H.;* Henry C. TENNEY, *West Hartford Public Schools, West Hartford 7, Conn.;* John THOMPSON, *American Newspaper Guild, Boston, Mass.;* I. Keith TYLER, *The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio;* John WALLACE, *School of Education, Boston University;* Gerhart WIEBE, *Columbia Broadcasting Company, New York City;* William WINSTON, *Newton Public Schools, Newton, Mass.*

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

CONFLICT and choice characterize our society. Television, society's mirror, cannot help reflecting and facing this reality. We, as a people, are forced to seek a balance between such all-pervading opposite pulls as conformity and independence, competition and collaboration, security and the desire for change, and others. Television for children, if it is to be in harmony with the dominant values of our society cannot escape the cultivation of this precarious, perhaps anxious, but exhilarating balance. The ends of television for children must be the development of the child, at his own rate of speed, into an adult who can find his life satisfactions within this scheme of diversity and unity. It should be the business of television for children to provide one of many bridges across which the child may pass from his fragmentary, fantasy world to the reality of adult life and social maturity.

To do this requires that television for children must find a balance between certain shared and certain conflicting desires of broadcasters, parents, and children in developing satisfying children's programs.

This booklet is concerned with the ten to fifteen percent of all television program broadcasts that are especially produced for or selected to meet children's interests. We are not concerned with all the programs that children watch, for that would include nearly all programs that are produced. From a practical broadcasting point of view, "children" means viewers between the ages of two and twelve, a disturbingly wide range but an inevitable one if television must reach always for the largest possible audience with all of its programming.

Many persons, at both national and local levels, hold the responsibility for making decisions as to what programs will be broadcast for children under twelve. Much of the time that is set aside for children's programming — late afternoons and Saturday mornings — is not pre-empted by network contracts, and is a time for local option and decision. Local station managers have responsibility for these decisions.

This booklet has been written for you who determine what programs shall be broadcast for children, and who must decide among available filmed programs which series to offer for local sponsorship. It has been written for you, too, whose decisions are even more far reaching in

their effects: you who are writing, producing, and directing live and filmed programs that will be repeatedly transmitted over many television stations. Your decisions must necessarily be governed by your own beliefs and your understandings of the children who are your audience, what their interests are, and what you know to be the practical realities of broadcasting as a business. Producers of television for children and parents as well may find it helpful to recognize that they make many assumptions about the child's mind which are purely adult. Their assumptions do not square with the ideas which children actually have about the world.

Parents are concerned about the kinds of programs produced and their possible effects upon children's attitudes and moral development. Broadcasters must satisfy cost requirements, audience, and sponsor in the programs they choose. We hope this booklet will present some insights into the child's actual world and provide television producers, managers, and parents with a more realistic map against which they may check present children's programs; suggest fresh opportunities for program material and creative techniques; and perhaps, alleviate some fears about television by summarizing what is known about its effects.

Chapter II

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

LET US LOOK first at the present programs aimed at children. Nearly half of these programs are "action drama." This includes the classic Western, the adventure story, the crime mystery, and science fiction. Much of the remaining time is variously devoted to puppet shows, circus programs, children's talent programs, quiz contests, comedy, family situation drama, and sports. There are a few serious assaults upon the child's curiosity in such programs as those whose subject matter is news, travel, religion, animals at a zoo, or elementary science. But at the most, these provide but one-fifth of his available television fare. Without benefit of expert psychological advice, and largely depending upon pragmatic observation, television program managers are capturing the young audience with programs in which *aggression* is the central ingredient.

Aggression, which is a fundamental problem to the child in his development, is expressed by physical violence confronting physical danger. The most common program of this sort is the action drama, of which the classic "Western" is a good example. The hero, personalizing virtue, and armed with the impregnable armor of "right," as well as the six-shooter, confronts evil, personalized by the villain; there is a violent physical struggle; and the right ultimately triumphs. The formula is much the same whether the hero is a detective or a scientist, and whether the locale is in a jungle, the Canadian North Woods, the police precinct, or the outer reaches of space. In such programs, the incidence of violence and threats of violence is great indeed.

The basic characteristic is physical action and violence in an oversimplified moral situation. Other characteristics of such programs are that any moral judgments required of the audience are always obvious and clear cut; there is seldom any choice between conflicting goals, or between shades of good and bad. This combination of elements, for varied reasons, appeals to children. It is relatively simple to produce, and to reproduce. A point often overlooked in production is that it is the activity which appeals to the children, not the violence. In fact the violence alienates many children, particularly girls. Action, movement, suspense, excitement are more interest-catching than mere violence.

But the appeal to aggressive impulses is not confined to action dramas. Violence plays a large part in the formula for successful comedy drama and the puppet show. The humorous violence of the slapstick comedy can offset the child's awareness of his inadequacy by making others appear even more inadequate or absurd. His anger and dislike for the adult-imposed regulations, which he dare not express directly, finds expression in the cartoon comics and in the exaggerated violence of the puppet show. The obviousness and simplicity of plot appeal to him.

Fear, curiosity, and achievement are motivating forces in children's viewing habits. The child, to the extent that the danger is controlled, enjoys fearing for the safety of his hero, whether he be cowboy or Mickey Mouse, just as the excitement in viewing many a circus act comes from vicarious fear for the safety of the performer. But the exploitation of fear in its more gruesome aspects is less often found in children's programs (except in certain fairy tales) than in the sus-

pense and horror stories intended for adult consumption.

Curiosity and achievement are more positive motivations to which appeal is made. Science information, animal and travel programs stimulate the child's desire to explore his environment, to know and understand the physical world in which he lives. Talent programs, whether amateur or professional, intrigue and stimulate the child's desire for achievement. Another appeal common on the information and instructional programs, and in the family life drama is the appearance of a child in whom the producer hopes the viewing child will see himself and respond to the program as if he were the child on the screen. The effectiveness of this device is doubtful, especially with the younger child for he finds it difficult to be sufficiently detached about himself to see others as himself. Not until the child extends his range of emotional contact to include a class friend, or even until later, when he can sense belonging to a small group, does this ability to feel and respond as other children develop. This is why the family-situation dramas appeal to children of the middle grades.

Family situations which are similar, even though exaggerated, to real life events, can have strong attraction for children because of the appeal to a number of motives. Seeing satisfying human relationships between adults and children reaches the child's needs for affection, acceptance, and support. Even where relationships are exaggerated and lampooned, the appeal can be as great, because it makes ridiculous situations which are too often painfully real. This is especially true during the transition period from viewing children's to viewing adults' television fare.

Growing up for the child is like walking up steps. The steps behind are completed and out of sight. The steps ahead are in full view. The immediate step is the most important, and attention is directed there, and ahead. The child's choice of television programs is similar. He is interested in programs at his particular stage of development, *plus* those at the levels ahead. Thus the six-year-old is likely to view not only programs which appeal to the six-year-old, but also those programs which appeal to children of ten or eleven. Yet he dismisses the stage immediately behind him as "kid-stuff."

As children approach the age of ten to twelve years, their interest jumps almost directly to adult programs (although there are differences between the preferences of boys and girls, as there are between those of men and women). This rapid and pronounced leap to adult television

fare may result from the scarcity of so-called "youth programs," but it is more likely caused by the teenager's desire to be grown up, and to make the transition to maturity. His intellectual capacity, which increases steadily during childhood, is close to its peak in mid-adolescence, and is sufficiently developed to find values in the most serious adult preoccupations, even though it will still be years before the youth arrives at mature understanding and comprehension of many aspects of life.

Chapter III

CONCERNS OF PARENTS

IT IS NATURAL that parents should be concerned with the effects of television programs. Would children become too passive, too inactive, too asocial, from spending so much time with television? Would they be able to develop critical judgment? Would television interfere with outdoor sports, impede reading and learning? Would it damage eyesight? Would it cause bad dreams? Would young children become overexcited, and overaggressive, from viewing the steady stream of gunfire and violence that seemed to be standard fare in television programs? And would they, perhaps, become morally insensitive, with continued exposure to the casual portrayal of criminal and "immoral" behavior found in some television dramas?

Some of these early fears have already been set at rest as experience with television grows. For one thing, parents and educators have discovered that much of the television fare offered to children is of truly excellent quality, by moral, intellectual and aesthetic standards. Furthermore, we know now that TV does not damage children's eyesight, and that it seems to have little or no measurable effect upon a child's performance in school. And the circulation of library books to children has not declined since the advent of television, a reasonable indication that our children are not becoming illiterate. In fact, there are instances in which specific books and plays are in greater demand at the library after they have been presented on television.

Yet, the fact remains that children are spending 20 to 30 hours a week watching television programs. Some of this time was formerly spent listening to the radio, reading adventure stories, or going to the movies. But some of the time has been taken from a variety of other children's activities — from sleep, from play, and from getting under

mother's feet during the hour before dinner! Whether the substitution of television for a segment of these varied children's activities means an important loss for the child of things that would be useful for his development in the long run is something we do not know.

Television has quite literally kept some children "off the streets." They have spent evenings at home viewing television with their parents which they would otherwise have spent away from home with young friends. If they live in neighborhoods where children's gangs get into trouble, and foster delinquent actions, then this change is obviously to the good. But television does cut down the total amount of time children spend with other children their own age, and if a child has a problem in being too shy socially, television is often times more hindrance than help. It should be noted, however, that parents almost universally approve of television for keeping children amused and occupied; they feel it has produced more harmonious homes.

How about some of the more subtle influences of television on the child's emotional and intellectual development? Research has not yet provided us the answers to many of the things we would like to know. There is some evidence that the "Western" type of drama arouses rather than quiets the child's aggressive impulses. There is also some evidence that prolonged exposure to the "pictorial media" makes children more stereotyped in their moral judgments — makes them more likely to see other people as "all good" or "all bad." Balanced against these possible adverse effects is the stimulation children get from the new knowledge television provides, about distant places, and about things and events in the world which they would have very little chance of experiencing directly.

Even the bits of evidence we do have about the effects of television must be considered in the light of an important qualification: the impact of television programs upon any particular child is as much a function of what the child is like before he sees the program as it is of the program itself. Any given program may be expected to have different effects upon different children, depending upon what they already know, what they are set to look for, what their strengths and weaknesses are. We may expect, then, that if and when research does provide us with more answers to questions about the effects of television on children, the answers will not be simple, and they will not apply to all children under all conditions.

Meanwhile, broadcasters of children's programs must be guided by common sense, a sense of responsibility, and a knowledge of children in their efforts to decide what should be included in a children's program. People responsible for children's programs may expect to receive much critical pressure from well-intentioned people who worry about one feature or another of the programs. Some of these criticisms will ultimately prove to be as unfounded as the early fears about eyesight were. But some of them will have merit. The broadcaster is faced with the difficult task of sorting out the legitimate comments from the "crackpot" and extremist views. We see a danger in program producers becoming too anxious to avoid conflict, criticism or controversy, so that they eliminate any program receiving unfavorable comments, and fear to experiment with new programs. This would produce unbearably bland and vapid programs. We recall with concern the experience with radio, when many stations abandoned children's programs to avoid the controversial atmosphere that sometimes attended them.

Still it is obvious that producers cannot ignore public opinion on a matter so important as the influence their material has on children's minds and emotions. Nor would they wish to ignore it if they could, for they feel a sense of personal responsibility for the welfare of their young audiences. Our purpose in this booklet is to provide as many guideposts as we can to the probable reactions and interests of young viewers, and to make some suggestions about how existing program material might be improved. We hope thereby to assist producers in meeting their public with some assurance that their programs are both safe and stimulating for children.

Chapter IV

PROBLEMS OF THE BROADCASTER

THE BROADCASTER who programs for children is faced with the immediate business requirements of running a TV station. He must of course sell his time, and preferably for the highest possible price. This means he must reach the widest possible audience. He must interest as many children as possible and appeal to the widest age group and interest range. At the same time he is aware of his great

social responsibility. He may well pose many questions as he faces the problem of creating a children's show.

The broadcaster must first meet the following practical requirements.

He must devise a program which will have a wide acceptance by its intended audience, and if possible, some acceptance by adults as well, so as to extend the total audience as widely as possible.

He must see that his program is accepted not only by those who watch it, but also by parent, church and community groups.

His program (if he is a small station producer with limited resources) must be producible without too much cost either of production expense or of staff time.

He may have certain commercial limitations or requirements. For instance, the sponsor may specify format, or participants, or specific audience.

Second, the broadcaster faces a choice of format. He may prefer to follow the tried and true, and pattern his program as closely as possible after successful children's programs. However, he also knows that not all types of television program ideas have been exploited. Thus it may be of great value to him to consider just what kinds of things and what methods of presentation are likely to interest children. The educational broadcasters will be particularly involved here since in most cases they consider their purpose not so much to please the broadest possible audience, as to fill in the gaps and develop new content areas and fulfill needs which the commercial broadcasters do not regularly satisfy.

For those readers not familiar with the broadcaster's problems, let us summarize briefly the programming resources available for the creation of children's programs before proceeding to specific questions. Productionwise, TV programming falls into three main categories: film, live remote and live studio. Of these, the second, live remote, is usually too expensive to be utilized for children's programming by the local station. Many studio programs may be produced for the cost of one remote. However, the networks and some of the larger local stations have produced some particularly valuable programs from zoo, harbor, railroad yard and other interesting points about town.

The simplest program, production-wise, is the film show. It is possible to program films for not much more than the cost of the film rental, and some of the films presented in late afternoon are free. However, the live emcee who introduces and concludes the film, and, of

course, delivers the commercials, is a standard element. The stylized western film, an hour or so in length, is available from the vaults of the minor Hollywood production companies, and in an increasing stream from new production especially for the TV market. More important to children's programming, however, is the seemingly endless supply of ancient cartoon comedies of the silent days, and more recently, one-reel comedies of the "Our Gang," early Chaplin, and Mack Sennett type, all of extreme age, consistently poor technical quality and often doubtful production quality. The cheapest and easiest children's program to produce is still this kind of film program.

The live studio possibilities in programming fall into two types: dramatic productions and nonfictional formats which do not utilize actors in the telling of a story. The first of these, drama, is generally too difficult and expensive for the local station to attempt on a routine daily basis although daily live dramatic programs, such as the so-called soap operas and the occasional daily live Western, are produced economically by the networks.

The live techniques used by the small station include simple entertainment, singing, dancing and various acts, audience participation, interview, demonstration, story telling, and puppets. The local broadcaster asks his questions about these live techniques. The network producer of dramatic programs, or the film producer of Western or Adventure stories for the children's audience may have further questions to put to the teacher and the psychologist, to the child and to those who know children best. Each would like to know what he should consider if he is to capture the largest audience, and if he is, at the same time, to make his not so small contribution to American culture worthwhile in the development of a strong and continuing democracy.

Certainly no set of general principles can answer all the specific production problems he will raise. But it may be that they will give him a basis of judgment in meeting his problems which are extremely real and involve such details as the following:

What kind of a person do children like? What background should he have, what experience? Should he play a make-believe role, e.g. sea captain, cowboy, space-man? What qualities are of primary importance?

How can or should children be used on a child's program? What kind of youngster is best for the role of proxy for the audience at home,

someone with whom they can identify, who will ask the questions they would ask, or do the things they would like to do if they were there? How can the emcee open up the personality of such a performer so he becomes a person, so the audience gets to know him and like him?

What are the dangers of choosing contestants out of the studio audience? Do child performers of the song and dance variety appeal to children? How can studio audiences participate, be interviewed, enjoined to sing, compete in games? What is the best treatment of this kind of activity? What elements might possibly be in bad taste or unwholesome either for the participants themselves or for the viewing audience? What are the pros and cons of competitions and contests, both among studio participants and among the home viewers? What kinds of games and contests are good and bad, for example what about games of skill vs. games of chance.

How can the fan club be used constructively? Can it be of more value to the program than a mere promotional device? Is there value in such activities as having youngsters write in answers, finish a story only partially told, answer riddles?

What age range finds interest in what areas? What aspects of such topics as science, nature, natural phenomena, will appeal to the largest number? What methods of presentation will be most effective? What areas are being neglected?

How interested are children in direct teaching of skills such as crafts, drawing, playing music, games? Can they actually learn something? Can we expect them to have materials at hand and work along with the television emcee? Is there interest in singing, dancing, learning a foreign language? How long will such interest extend? What is a reasonable attention span for entertainment and nonentertainment?

In following a story, how much does the child accept as real and how much does he understand to be fantasy? What elements in a story might actually frighten the child, cause bad dreams, and what elements or treatments are accepted as just part of the story? Must the story have a villain, and is there anything essentially harmful in the utilization of the various stereotyped characters, or is this reassuring to the child?

These are some of the questions the producer of a children's program may ask. Each of these questions is, of course, somewhat general in itself, and each individual case contains different elements and needs a separate evaluation based on all the factors. However, there are gen-

eral principles which may be applied against specific problems and may help provide a sound basis for the producer's judgment. In addition, some specific answers are suggested in the digest at the end of the booklet.

Chapter V

THE CHILD

THE YOUNG CHILD has a language of feeling, but a limited language of words, of ideas, of concepts, and of understandings. These he attains slowly, as a result of much learning, only part of which takes place in school. He learns a great deal from other children, from parents, from other adults. TV, with its vivid, dramatic, emotion-producing techniques, can be an important influence in shaping the child's attitudes and understandings of social ideas and concepts.

TV can not escape responsibility for its part in the child's learning to live by the standards of the adult world. But before we can determine the effect TV programs are likely to have, or how they should be evaluated, we must take a brief look at some of the growth and learning processes in children which determine what they are capable of assimilating from television. Children are not just miniature adults, and it is a mistake to judge the effects of programs on them by adult standards.

The child is more emotional than the adult. Experiences which are purely intellectual, or emotionally neutral, for an adult, are often charged with joyous or sorrowful feeling for a child. Thus, an adult seeing a broken chair may think "I must have that fixed." A child, seeing it, may think "Poor thing!" — attributing feelings to the chair and sharing them sympathetically.

While the child feels intensely, and is more easily aroused to joy, anger, excitement or fear than the adult, his emotional states are more transitory. He cannot hold grudges, nor build up suspense slowly over an extended period. As he grows older, he becomes capable of more subtle shades of feeling, but early in life his emotions have an "all or none" quality — he is either angry or calm; he is seldom just a little irritated.

A child becomes interested in a television program primarily when his emotions are aroused. There are two ways in which television

programs accomplish this purpose. One is by presenting situations which are directly arousing without any story mediation; for example, the picture of a big snarling lion makes the child apprehensive directly. The other way is by showing a hero in emotion-arousing situations. The child puts himself in the hero's place as he watches the story, and shares the emotions he thinks the hero is experiencing.

We can only surmise what the child's reasons are for identifying with a story hero. The best guess is that the child does it (as the adult does) in order to have, vicariously, experiences which are rewarding. Stories greatly enlarge the range of experiences possible to a child. In real life he is rather small and powerless. When he puts himself in the place of the hero of a Western, however, he can experience virtuous power, success, and the excitement of new surroundings. The extent to which a child seeks the second-hand rewards of television fantasy is probably determined, in part, by how satisfying his daily life is — the less satisfying, the more likely he is to take refuge in television. But real-life frustrations are by no means the only source of a child's interest in television shows — he is capable of responding enthusiastically to the new experiences offered simply because exploration of the world he lives in is a source of pleasure in its own right, whether or not it also provides escape from unpleasantness.

The story content which will arouse a young child's interest is highly varied (and, of course, different for different children), but in the main, the child is drawn to themes which represent the issues he faces in his own life. He is *not* usually interested, for example, in themes related to the struggle for financial security. This problem is usually taken care of for the child without his knowing it exists. But there are certain major issues which nearly all children in our society must face. The child is being taught, during his first ten years of life, how he is expected to handle aggressive impulses. All children have such impulses. They must learn that aggression is not to be expressed directly toward parents or other adults, nor toward younger children or defenseless animals. At the same time, he *is* supposed to defend himself against the attacks of others. The child learns to feel guilty and anxious over most expressions of aggression. But if the situation is arranged so that aggression is not only tolerated but approved, he can enjoy its expression hugely. It becomes more evident, now, where the appeal of "Westerns" lies. The villain exists, not as a figure for the child to identify with, but as an excuse to make the aggression of the

hero (whom the child *does* identify with) permissible.

The main motives which have been exploited to capture the interest of children in dramatic productions have been, in a sense, negative ones. The child is permitted to express aggression in socially approved channels. Or fears are briefly aroused and then the child has the pleasure of having the fears resolved. This mechanism, like the roller coaster, operates on the principle that the arousal of fear is fun because of the feeling of relief that ensues when the danger is past.

In adolescence, of course, sexual interests come to the fore, but in earlier childhood, children either have little in the way of sexual interest or they find sexual material threatening. (Probably they have some of both.) When material has romantic content, children are likely to avoid it, or to reinterpret it so that much of its intended significance is lost.

Although story episodes involving aggression or danger are almost sure-fire arousers of emotion in children, there are "positive" motives which can be appealed to with enough story skill. Children take great pleasure in exploration, in discovery; the most exciting kind of game is a treasure hunt, and this is true even if the "treasure" is not intrinsically valuable. It is the excitement of the search that the child enjoys and the process of solving the puzzle.

Another of the most powerful motives of childhood is the desire to be loved and supported by significant adults — or, to look at the other side of the picture, the fear of being abandoned by these normally supportive figures. In all children's lives, the period of emotional dependency on parents must be superseded by independent, self-reliant behavior. Although children learn to do things for themselves and not demand the constant help and approval of their parents, still they yearn for the more sheltered days of babyhood when they could cling to their parents without being disapproved. It is an interesting fact that the theme of dependency and its resolution has not figured strongly in story material for children. Occasionally there is a story about a child who is homesick at summer camp, or lost in the woods, but such stories are rare compared with stories about aggression. Since it is a central problem of childhood, our expectation is that with sensitive and constructive handling, story themes could be worked out which would attract children and help them to work through their anxieties in this sphere.

We pointed out earlier that the child, in watching a dramatic production on television, puts himself in the hero's place and momentarily feels that he is going through the experiences which the hero undergoes. What importance does this have? Does the child learn from these experiences in the same way he would if he were having the experiences in real life? Or do these many fantasy episodes merely capture his interest momentarily and leave little lasting impression?

While the point is by no means proven, we believe that a child can and does learn values through sharing the experiences of story heroes. He learns how people *ought* to behave in certain circumstances. If nothing in his other training contradicts the moral implications of a hero's actions, the child will store up ideas about proper behavior and will draw upon them in the future on appropriate occasions. Thus the young girl may learn from plays how a young wife is supposed to act in case of a disagreement with her husband long before she puts this knowledge to use. Furthermore, moral values thus incorporated may have an impact on his own behavior even though an individual never finds himself in a situation where he can put them to use directly. His ability to understand and sympathize with other people may be determined in part by what he has learned about the roles they occupy.

In discussing what a child is likely to learn from watching TV shows we have stressed "values." Of course, the child can pick up specific items of information and specific skills. But we feel the learning of values is more important because it is more pervasive. Thus, a child may learn something about how to draw a gun from a shoulder holster from watching a gangster picture, but the chances are that he will never make use of this information. He is more likely to incorporate into his own behavior some of the more subtle assumptions underlying the behavior of the characters with whom he identifies. For example, he may begin to accept the notion that in case of conflict, the "good guy" is justified in imposing his will on others by force. In real life, there is an enormous range of possible solutions to problems involving conflict between people. Most of these possibilities remain unexplored in the stereotyped children's dramas. It would be interesting to explore story endings which solve conflict by compromise, or by problem-solving efforts which permitted both parties to get what they wanted, to see if the dramatic quality of the stories could be retained and children's interest held.

It should be emphasized that the nature and amount of satisfaction

the child gets, and the after-effects of the experience, depend on the way motivational themes are resolved in the plot of the story. A child will experience no release from his aggressive impulses if the hero engages in aggressive activity which is not morally justified in the story. On the contrary, if the hero is aggressive in socially disapproved ways, the child viewer will suffer from anxiety and guilt feelings (unless he is a psychopath or a confirmed delinquent). Similarly, the villain's aggression must be punished as the plot is resolved, if the child is to feel comfortable about the aggressions having occurred at all. Furthermore, the characteristics of the villain should make him as *unlike* the child viewer as possible, to diminish the child's identification and suffering when the villain deviates and is punished. An instance of something to be avoided is the "bad boys" in Walt Disney's Pinocchio — many youngsters cried or hid their eyes when these boys were wildly destroying property on Pleasure Island. The scenes were too close to home, too threatening to a child who was trying to learn control of his own destructive impulses.

In the case of themes which derive their interest from arousing fear, the resolution of the fear-producing situation should be complete, to avoid unhealthy after-effects at least for the youngest children. Big animals that try to eat little children should lose their teeth and be left harmless, or should have their threat effectively neutralized at the end of the program.

The learning of values and the arousing and discharging of emotions are only part of the child's learning. A good deal of learning requires ideas and words to give shape to ideas. How does a child form an idea? He gets an idea from many specific experiences he has with objects or persons by attaching words to these objects and persons or aspects of them and by correcting wrong applications. Take the terms applied to the adult male. Billy Jones very early learns to call Mr. Jones "daddy." A little later he speaks of a strange man as "daddy," much to his mother's amused embarrassment. From this he learns that "man" applies generally to big males and that "daddy" is reserved to a particular male. Then a little later he learns that Joey Smith next door calls Mr. Smith "daddy" quite correctly. But Joey doesn't call Mr. Jones "daddy." So far, so good. Billy enters school and one day meets his teacher's husband at school. When he refers to Mrs. Richards' "daddy" he has to learn still another limitation. It takes at least six or seven years for the average child to use correctly such

ideas as man, husband, daddy. Developing abstract ideas is a slow process.

We often take for granted that a child understands time and space much as grownups do. Yet children under twelve do *not* have the same understanding or concepts as adults about such common features of life.

A child of three years can use "yesterday" and "tomorrow" correctly. By five years he can refer accurately to the four seasons. By six or seven he gets the days of the week identified according to family routine (if there is a family routine which identifies each day). He can recite the days of the week before he can give months of the year in order. Before he is eight he doesn't have much of an idea of what a year is and cannot even begin to tell in abstract terms what "time" means before nine or ten. Any workable idea of the duration of historical time isn't available to an average child before twelve or thirteen, no matter how efficient his teachers have been. For the fifth-grade child, stories from history are simply interesting stories, and as far as he is concerned, the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth Rock about the time the Rocky Mountains were formed. The fifth grader may know the story of Miles Standish and the story of Davy Crockett but can't (unless he is particularly adept at reasoning) tell you who lived first, let alone the fact that Davy preceded the present day by only half as much time as Miles preceded Davy!

As for space, most adults have had the experience of returning to a home or school room not seen since childhood. One remembers how much smaller the place seems than his remembered image. As a child, he was small, and his world was large by comparison. Progressively, and imperceptibly, he built up new, grown-up size-space images. Then to go back, physically, to contrast his adult scale with the remembered childhood scale, produces a kind of shock.

Just as the young child has poorly developed ideas of space and time relationships, he often has a hazy idea of cause and effect relationships. He is limited by his lack of knowledge, experience, and terms rather than by any form of magical or irrational thinking. A young child may have difficulty following a plot which is clear to grownups. A large rock rolls down hill. Without seeing the actual push, an adult understands that the villain started it; the young child may find no reason for it, or may assume it rolled down because it wanted to. The child finds it difficult to make inferences, to "read between the lines."

Perhaps more important, and even harder to realize, are the understandings children form in the area of interpersonal relations and in moral relationships. A child learns to put himself in the place of another person, or to take account of another person's wishes, only slowly and through many experiences. By age four, a child may begin to appreciate how another child feels when he hurts himself in a fall, but until eight or nine he can't really appreciate how another child may feel who has been beaten in a game of skill. Probably it will be several more years before he can begin to understand how a child feels who has been discriminated against because of his skin color. And this is true even though most children begin to be conscious of "fair play" by seven or eight.

Children can solve intellectual and social problems at any age, provided the problems are those that a child of that age might meet and that the children have already gained the basic ideas which are necessary to solve the problem.

At twelve or thirteen the morality of the typical Western thriller is a little simple and the thrill or suspense motive not as significant as it was earlier.

A discussion of honesty in political life may have little meaning for ten-year-olds who can tackle with considerable success a problem involving cheating in play or in school. Ten-year-olds are likely to have a fair working knowledge of ideas of "fairness" and "honesty" applied to situations in which they live. Seven-year-olds would have much less success with the problem since they are just beginning to get general ideas of what "fair play" is, apart from breaking specific rules in games of tag or marbles.

One of the child's important learnings is the distinction between what is *real* and what is *imagined*. The preschool child's world is not firmly organized. He has a vivid imagination and his make-believe play often shows the seriousness and intensity which the adult reserves for *real* life. The preschool child dresses up, plays house, "makes believe" with blocks, dolls, puppets and toys with vividness and earnestness. As he grows older, he enjoys make-believe in which Superman does the impossible, partly because he himself is beginning to realize how limited he is by his own lack of skills and abilities and by his dependent position as a child. Every experience with things and with other people which sharpens his understandings of the limitations of human strength and power permits him to see more clearly Super-

man as "make-believe." At the same time, and by the same token, Superman becomes appealing because he can make happen what the mere mortal cannot. The enjoyment of fantasy can go hand in hand with the ability to separate the fantastic from the real. The adult's job is to help the child see clearly what the limits of human ability are and eventually to get his most satisfying experiences out of his own effort and achievement rather than imagined or fantasied performance. Imagination which results in production is healthy; imagination which substitutes for production is less healthy.

A part of the ability to form abstract ideas and to discriminate reality comes from sheer growth in mental power, but another source is the breadth and extent of experience. It is the very nature of experience to broaden the child's base of knowledge from which he can gain new understandings. It is in just this connection that television becomes so important. It holds a great potential for affording many new experiences easily and quickly. It gives the child ideas with which to solve problems. It is vivid, realistic, dramatic and emotionally appealing.

To make the most of its possibilities, TV should deliberately seek to stimulate learning as well as to entertain. For children, virtually all experiences, no matter how intentioned or casual, have some significance for developing ideas and understandings. A number of things can be said about children's experiences which are effective for learning.

1. Experiences in which new ideas are presented in relation to familiar ideas are more effective than those in which new ideas are unrelated to the familiar. For instance, to describe Columbus' ships as of 120 tons capacity is one thing, but to describe them as carrying about as much cargo as a large railroad boxcar gives the child a much clearer idea of the size of the vessel and also of Columbus' courage and achievement.

2. The child learns social standards more effectively when these ideas and activities are associated with a person with whom he can identify than with a person who is totally strange or who is not a good identification figure. For example, a warm, friendly adult actor generally has more appeal to a child than a cold, casual or disinterested person. Another child who in age, characteristics, or interests is like the viewer may be a better identification figure than a child who is greatly dissimilar in age or characteristics. For young children, particularly, the element of familiar social roles, familiar scenes or places,

familiar experiences or problems has particular interest and appeal. A simple story which shows a child being helpful and kind in the familiar routines of kindergarten will be of greater interest and potential teaching value to four- five- and six-year-olds than a story of a youth in King Arthur's Court who embodies all the ideals of friendliness and helpfulness. In any case, the identification figure must be well established in warm human terms.

3. Programs for children should in general portray the situations and problems of childhood rather than the situations and problems of adult living. The program director interested in reaching children effectively can profit greatly from his own knowledge or observation of children. Lacking time or opportunity for personal acquaintance, he can discuss his problem with those who do know children well, intelligent parents, teachers, psychologists, group workers and recreational leaders, and children themselves.

4. While children learn from painful and unpleasant experiences, they generally learn more effectively from experiences which are "rewarding," that is, which supply children's needs, answer their questions, support their efforts and forward their goals. Reward programs which attempt to get viewing children to try new skills and which recognize children quite by accident or reward children for achievements in which parent effort plays a large part; for example, costumes which mothers make or puzzles which parents solve.

5. Programs which induce children to experiment with ideas, objects, tools, or materials are preferable to programs which lead to no further activity. A book program which simply entertains may be good, but one which induces some children to hunt out books for further reading is even better. Programs which show a child how to assemble a kit may be good, but one which induces a child to hunt out new materials and build his own "kit" can be even better. Experiences which induce children to manipulate are, in general, more significant for personality development than experiences which induce children merely to watch.

Thus far we have emphasized the general development and responsiveness of the child. Now a more specific look at the part television plays in the process of character development is appropriate because television is far more than mere entertainment. It is, for better or worse, a constant companion providing a running commentary on life. Recognizing this fact is particularly important when it comes to the

young viewer, for the mind of the child is impressionable and his character is in process of formation. Children acquire their values gradually and obliquely — through absorption more than precept, through experience, imitation and relationships more than by words. They are the slow deposit of everyday events and contacts over the entire range of childhood. This points directly to television, for it is a daily affair, with a cumulative effect upon children of all ages. Moreover, its "teaching" comes to the child under the guise of pleasure, and its "teachers" (whether emcees or heroes in stories) command maximum interest and admiration. It therefore provides a unique opportunity to influence the growth of values.

On the surface it looks as if the statement of these values would be an easy matter. They are, of course, the common standards that stem from our religious heritage and democratic tradition. And they are simple enough to enumerate. Among them are honesty, cooperation, respect for others, loyalty, and helpfulness. But the ease is deceptive, and presents a triple problem. When can the average child begin to understand each of the major values? How can TV handle the inevitable conflicts among the social values of our time — the fact that we prize both cooperation and competition, or that we believe not only in helping others, but in encouraging them to help themselves? How can TV help in character development?

Between the ages of three and five, children make their first real attempts at sociability and play with others. At the beginning of this period, they find it hard to adapt to more than one adult or a few other children at a time. Large play groups are likely to be confusing and overexciting — and that goes for large numbers in television presentations as well. Interestingly, the average child takes his first steps in the direction of genuine cooperation and genuine competition at about the same time: between three and four. On television, competition can be introduced through simple games played in a congenial atmosphere, while cooperation can be encouraged through "rhythms," singing games, following directions in easy arts and crafts activities. During this period the urge to grow and be "big" gains strength, and can be constructively fed by stories of small animals, small vehicles (tugboats, or "The Little Engine That Could"), as well as small children who perform useful actions. Concepts of fairness and order are being formed during this period and can best be instilled through action or the observation of action: taking turns, and cleaning up, for example.

Sympathy develops more slowly because of the small child's difficulty in projecting himself into others. However, television programs might pave the way for sympathetic attitudes by depicting the care and training of pets, as well as by offering carefully selected stories and cartoons about animals. (These are often more effective than stories about people.) Since at this early stage, children are still quite dependent on their parents, it is generally desirable to have the programs conducted by a sympathetic mother figure or a particularly gentle father figure.

Between five and eight, children are generally ready for the values of fair play, giving everybody a chance, and making decisions through discussion and even voting. One appropriate format is the club meeting, with a fatherly puppeteer or emcee in charge. If games are played and prizes given, it is important to give awards for skill rather than chance performance, and to keep them in some proportion to the achievement — otherwise a distorted sense of values will be suggested. In this age range, adventure stories involving the relation of a child to an animal are particularly appealing, and provide an opportunity for presenting loyalty, courage and kindness in ways the child can understand. Since studies indicate that a surprising number of youngsters begin to echo adult prejudices during this period, particular care should be taken to avoid all kinds of stereotypes and to encourage sympathetic understanding.

In the pre-adolescent period, from nine to about twelve, the child's moral world expands to include good citizenship, the righting of social wrongs, self-sacrifice of nurses and soldiers, responsibility to the gang, school class or scout group. Honesty and politeness are accepted as values, but spotty in practice. The average ten-year-old has a sound working concept of democracy and is more creative and better satisfied under democratic guidance than under authoritarian or laissez-faire leadership. Parental influence is beginning to wane, and family values are frequently challenged by outside forces. The typical ideal figures are now derived from fiction, history and the real world of counselors, teachers and entertainment personalities. Television frequently presents these heroes in most attractive light (although at present the scope is too limited — for instance, great figures in the history of science and the arts are rarely presented). The pre-adolescent is vitally concerned with values; he loves to talk and argue about good and bad, right and wrong. Furthermore, he is capable of under-

standing that right and wrong can come in mixed form, that people are rarely all good or all bad, and that things do not always turn out for the best. Program builders should therefore seek ways to avoid crude black-white, hero-villain concepts, while still retaining dramatic values.

Our society supports many conflicting values. Recognizing this and learning to accept and live with these conflicts is an important task for children.

Cooperation stands above competition in our moral heritage, and so it must be on television. Nevertheless, the medium should also recognize the need for healthy competition among children as a preparation for life in our society. Through stories and games it can focus on competition as an incentive to self-improvement or constructive endeavor instead of the defeat of the other fellow and discourage cutthroat, tense, devil-take-the-hindmost variety. It can depict group activities, such as team rivalry, that successfully combine cooperation and competition — and show how even the bitterest competitors may learn to bury the hatchet and work together for a larger cause.

In our culture there is a dual drive: to be unique and to be like the Joneses. There are positive values in each — we, and our children, seem to derive more self-respect and feeling of worth from being ourselves, but more security from conforming to others. Of the two, the one that seems to need more emphasis today is individuality. Through television, the child can be shown how to attain a new interpretation of games, sports, occupations and even schoolwork. He can be encouraged, too, to accept his family's pattern even though it differs from his neighbor's. A series of programs that invite the viewers to send in their art work, homemade toys and "inventions" — or their new twists on old hobbies — would encourage self-expression, and, at the same time, offer a constructive answer to the criticism that the medium encourages uniformity. So, too, would programs that show the unique contributions of different ethnic groups to America — different ways of solving everyday problems in other cultures — or the important roles played by unpopular ideas throughout history.

In America we talk a good deal about emotional maturity, but too often we keep our children protected and dependent as long as possible. Growing up means growing away from parental support — which does not mean eliminating affection and respect for parents (in fact, as one parent put it, "the more you let them go, the more you keep them.")

Television programs can help this process along in many ways — for example, by giving young viewers sound vocational information; showing the inside of factories, docks, offices, while describing the personal qualities required for success. This will help youngsters think concretely about their future and give them some of the tools for making their own decisions. Similarly, it can depict many out-of-school activities that have a maturing influence, such as part-time jobs, community service and youth hostelling, even though done incidental to other program effects.

In late childhood and early adolescence, children in the United States and Canada are under strong community pressure to become social participants and to expand their interests into the real world, both social and physical. Television as well as other modes of communication — books, radio, and films — can enrich and encourage these impulses.

Another conflict arises from the fact that in America we place a high premium on activity, and criticize any medium, such as television, that seems to promote passivity. Something can be said for the fact that in watching the screen we are not simply behaving like a sponge, but are thinking, feeling and at least *re*acting. Something can also be said in favor of quietly absorbing, at times, instead of being constantly up and doing. Nevertheless, those responsible for programming should be on the lookout for specific, positive ways of stimulating child viewers to constructive activity. Their identification with a leading character or "personality" can be utilized by having him recommend community projects or reading matter. In fact, stations might even publicize lists of books suggested by their dramatic or informational programs, and work directly with libraries and schools for this purpose. Do-it-yourself and crafts programs can arouse an interest in new projects and show what is involved in them, even if they cannot teach all the steps and details. The children themselves might be encouraged to submit or demonstrate projects of their own that have been inspired by television.

As early as three or four our children are beginning to assume their sex roles. This is a gradual affair, but an all-important process in the achievement of a comfortable and satisfying place in the scheme of things. On television, feminine roles (mother, nurse, teacher, wife) should be portrayed in such positive ways that the girl will want to become a woman — similarly for the boy who is seeking masculine

expression. However, misleading and undesirable portrayals creep in all too easily: stock portrayals of women as schemers or fathers as "dopes;" male heroes as strong, silent men who always make their decisions without consulting others; female heroes who solve every problem through sex appeal. Another unfortunate pattern is the tendency to distinguish *too* sharply between the sexes. Television stories can show that girls and women do not have a corner on tenderness, humaneness or the ability to care for children — and men do not have a corner on mechanical aptitude, physical power or courage.

One of the goals of children's television should be to widen the child's outlook to include people outside his home, outside his neighborhood, outside his state and country. Today many Americans are not sure how far they want to go in the direction of internationalism, but in spite of this conflict in our culture, there are many concrete ways that television can stimulate awareness of the world at large. It can introduce more folk dances and stories from other lands, take its viewers on world tours, acquaint boys and girls with the vital work of the United Nations, encourage "pen-pal" relationships between children here and abroad, follow the careers of exchange students. A sense of belonging to the whole world as well as to one's family and community can only enhance the feeling of security and broaden the scope of life.

These are only samples of the social and ethical currents in our culture. Even a single moral principle can cause us much conflict when we must decide between divided loyalties. But whatever the values, television need not ignore or deny the conflicts that exist. If it did, it would not be true to life, and it would overlook one of its most exciting resources — for conflict is the essence of drama. But it must not exaggerate the conflicts either, and present a scattered and disturbing picture of reality. Rather, it should be careful to introduce contrasting values in small and manageable doses, with the child's level of development constantly in mind — and use every means to encourage young viewers to face reality and work out their own solutions.

Chapter VI

ACHIEVING ARTISTRY AND SHOWMANSHIP

ALL CONSIDERATIONS relating to the achievement of artistry and showmanship are focused on the program itself — as an act of communication, an event in time, with a beginning, middle, and end.

The most effective way to begin a communication, or a program, is to begin with, or hold up for your viewers, a symbol which evokes an interested response. The opening symbol should be interesting, and of importance to the child's world, clearly related to his experience, and within his language. The symbol should be an accurate forecast of what is to come. It should not be a trick or a cheat which misrepresents. It should promise something interesting, which it is prepared to fulfill.

A well-known midwestern TV program for children furnishes an example, utilizing the theme of a friendly giant. Giants are commonly fearsome creatures: a friendly giant is a novelty. Thus the program begins with the promise of a fresh, exciting adventure. The opening symbol is attractive and stimulating. The program's formal opening and the giant's opening remarks are slightly different each time, providing recognition, familiarity, with a touch of freshness. The two qualities oppose and balance each other. They provide a unity in diversity, thus obeying the law of "necessary inconsistency." Many popular children's programs have openings which are friendly and familiar, perhaps even exciting symbols, but they never vary in the slightest degree from program to program. They measure up in one half of the equation — they are familiar, but they fall short in the other — they lack the touch of zestful novelty.

Uusally, in sponsored television, the commercial immediately follows the opening. We are concerned here only with artistry and showmanship, and not with other values, so we will pass over the question: Is it desirable to integrate the commercial with the entertainment part of the program? The first two program considerations, the nature of the child and his ethical world, would seem to suggest that entertainment and commercials be separated. If they were to be separated, the same considerations of artistry and showmanship which apply to the entertainment portions of the program might well apply to the commercials as entities in themselves — namely, they should not be con-

ceived as one-dimensional hortatory expositions ("hard sells") but rather as unities, with beginning, middle, and end, and some internal dynamics of development.

The entertainment usually begins after the first commercial. Ideally, this beginning should relate back and be a development of the symbolic opening. It should develop what has already been established. It should not merely restate it. The new development, however, should be so couched that a viewer who has missed the opening may still understand the unfolding action.

The chief business of the main portion of the program, once it begins (be it drama, comedy, variety, quiz, or information) should be the fulfillment of the original promise through a sort of dynamic growth or heightening of tension and importance to a conclusion. The conclusion should satisfactorily discharge the tension aroused by the action. This discharge may be a stimulation to follow through after the program with some constructive action. It may also be the internal achievement of some new insight. Ideally, the program should in some significant way re-structure the child's assumptions so that he is not left at the point at which the program found him, but is preferably enriched.

An important qualification of the principle of heightening tension is that the tempo of the heightening should be in direct ratio to the child's capacity to absorb and understand impressions, depending upon his age level. A nine-year-old's rate of absorption is much faster than a four-year-old's. He has a wider accumulation of experience to draw on. His assumptions are farther advanced towards the adult world. A nine-year-old will gain satisfaction and excitement out of a chase in a fast-moving Western. It is a mistake, however, to assume that the same rate of speed has to be evoked in the four-year-old. The latter may experience, in ratio, the same intensity of excitement and suspense from a much slower-moving situation. The ideal is to match the situation and the nature of the excitement and suspense with the child's capacity to absorb them. To put it differently: emotional experience takes place on various scales. As we grow up, as our accumulation of experience grows, our scales of response develop.

The producer of television programs for children may rightly conclude from the foregoing that programs don't have to move along at an adult rate of excitement to keep children interested. Our suggestion is: identify your age group; find out what their assumptions are about

their world; learn something about their rates of response, and program, wherever possible, for specific age levels. You can have too much excitement: your speed can be too fast for the preschooler; and, as a result, your communication may break down. On the other hand, if your speed is too slow, you may lose your audience. If you must program for overlapping age groups, it might be helpful if you identified the numerically largest group and aimed the program at that group, picking up marginal satisfactions from the adjacent age levels.

The "middle" of the program is our next consideration — maintaining and developing the original interest which has been established. This depends on many classical concepts of dramatic art, such as suspense, complication, and change of pace. One point, character-in-depth, is of special interest to children's programs. It means presenting people, real or fictional, in multiple phases, so that viewers may know them, care about them, and make sympathetic identification with them. Many otherwise fine children's programs fail in this respect. Especially in the popular children's adventure programs, the heroes are commonly known only in some fragmentary aspect of their total personalities. They are stencils, figures, types, rather than whole people. Informational and science programs designed for children, might conceivably be more effective if the main person were depicted in some depth, shown in other facets of personality than information dispenser, or, if the viewers knew more about the youngsters who act as on-stage receivers of the science lore. Who are they? What is their real background? What are their other interests? It is a well-known fact, psychologically, that we learn better when instructed by people we care about than otherwise. Action exclusively is not the whole of artistry and showmanship. Motivation is also necessary. We must not only see *what* people do; we must understand *why* they do it — as individuals, not as types.

The question of spotting the last commercial is important to the program producer. He wants to place it at the moment of maximum interest, so that his viewers will stay through the entire commercial. It is not the best artistry to place the commercial where it frustrates the natural climax or closure of the communication. Attention, of course, is the goal: but irritated attention detracts from the artistry. A better way is to achieve completion — and to promise some sort of epilogue or addendum — which holds the audience.

As for the final curtain, or "exit march," it should echo the familiar,

interesting symbol posed at the program's opening with some minor variation.

In addition to the foregoing, some general observations on artistry and showmanship that may be helpful to program producers are:

1. Select more critically the people chosen for the chief jobs in a children's TV show. Try, if possible, to pick people who have a genuine regard for and interest in children. This concern need not necessarily come from a parent. Professional training in work with children may provide it. There are cases where popular figures in children's programs are interested in their audiences exclusively in terms of economics. This should not deter the search for performers and creators who do care about children. In the long run, lack of genuine interest will tell in staleness and a sense of mechanical routine.

2. The conditions of the industry, which call for the repetition of successful formulae, week in, week out, are essentially opposed to the true artistic process which demands constant experimentation, fresh discovery, and growth on the part of the artist. This is a restatement of the principle of "necessary inconsistency," (a basic theme of this report). It presents producers with the problem of how to maintain the familiar yet refresh it. The solution, not an easy one, lies in the direction of nurturing a sense of creative excitement, of assuming a program to be a constant process rather than an end product. People who are themselves discovering, never fail to communicate a sense of discovery to an audience. Television has a special handicap in this respect. Its rate of consumption of program material is such that writers and producers experience unlimited pressure and with it fatigue. Creativity, discovery, and novelty wither under these circumstances and in place comes a tendency to resort to the devices of adult entertainment.

3. It is often assumed that children should be featured as participants in children's programs in order to gain identification for child viewers. Aesthetically, to seek identification purely on an age basis, may be seeking it on a false level. The real basis of identification is recognition, understanding and interest. A child will identify with adults if they are reflecting experiences and emotions to which he attaches importance. A child, on the other hand, may fail to identify with a youngster on TV if he doesn't understand or care about what that youngster is experiencing. Again, the question of interest based on characters depicted in depth is the controlling one.

4. Violence, aggression, suspense, mystery, confusion, fear — even noise, are not necessarily undesirable in children's programs. We live in a violent, confused, anxious time — and it is the business of art to reinterpret and give expression, perhaps meaning, to all aspects of experience. From the artist's viewpoint, however, it is imperative to use these materials, not as ends in themselves, but in counterpoint with other more affirmative moods, emotions and tensions, and always with restraint, good taste, simplicity, clarity, understatement — and, above all — to use them to make a point which underscores and develops the central or basic theme or idea of the program.

Finally, to echo our own theme, we cannot nor can television, avoid the conflicts and choices that exist in our efforts to conduct ourselves in accordance with moral precepts, whatever their diversity and whatever the causes of this diversity. Each decision about each program has to be made amidst a welter of conflicting pulls — such as time, content, cost, format, characters, showmanship. For all of this, television, like the family, the school, the church, and the government is expected to act in accordance with, and encourage the achievement of the general ideals of the society. There may be conflicts in ideals but the ideals are real, definite, and believed in. The reconciliation does not lie in ignoring or avoiding their existence, any more than a bland custard will satisfy all the courses of a balanced meal. The repetition of trite formats, the continued presentation of unchanging stereotypes can only make television an endless corridor of mirrors rather than a stimulating experience opening new avenues to the world — of people, of ideas, of places, of things. We hope that this booklet, with its information about children and their development will help the producers, writers, and program directors to greater understanding of children and their needs and of television as an important influence in their character development. We hope it will aid station managers in making their decisions and selections with respect to programs they broadcast, and perhaps add to parents' understanding of children and of television for children.

A Digest

The material on *Television for Children* was prepared by a small group of specialists in television, education, and psychology. The Foundation for Character Education commissioned them to prepare a publication which not only emphasized the known importance of television as an influence on character formation in children but also illustrated the ways in which its influence was and could be exercised as a constructive means to sound character development. This digest lists the highlights of the publication, which points out the different perspectives with which broadcasters, parents, and children view television as well as incorporating several specific suggestions for program format and content.

The Broadcaster's Requirements (*See pages 13–16*)

To devise programs having wide audience appeal

To produce programs satisfying sponsor's requirements

To produce programs which avoid criticism from adults

To meet cost of production and time requirements

To create a large volume of programs

Children's Television Programs

The Main Diet (*See pages 8–10*)

Action Drama including
- Westerns
- Adventure stories
- Crime mystery
- Science fiction

Family Drama

Variety Programs

With overdependence on
- Aggression and violence
- Slapstick comedy
- Brilliant child achievement
- Stereotyped characters and role-playing

Needed Programs (*See pages 17–30*)

Programs tapping
- Children's curiosity
- Exploration and adventure
- Fantasy
- Human relations

With content areas about
- Natural and physical science
- Man's world
- Arts and crafts
- Hobbies
- Children's lives and literature

Which show or appeal to
- Satisfying human relations
- Identification with worthwhile human traits
- Acceptance and affection
- Desirable levels of skill and craftmanship
- Aid children to secure independence

And which demonstrate
- adults and children exemplifying moral and spiritual qualities such as honesty, integrity, humility and reverence and with the problems and conflicts associated with their attainment.

The Effects of Television on Children (*See pages 11–13*)

The effects vary with individual children and their family backgrounds and adjustment problems, but in general, television has had

Little or no effect on	Eyesight and health Achievement in school Reading of books and library usage
Considerable effect on	Time spent watching TV — 20–30 Hours per week Keeping some children off streets Reducing amount of sleep Reducing play with other children
Unknown effects on	Character development Moral behavior Fears Aggression Behavior patterns

The Child

The child's task is to learn the signals of the adult world. The adult's task is to see and understand the world as the child sees it.

The child reacts emotionally rather than intellectually.

He responds with feeling rather than abstract analysis.

He is non-objective about himself, easily aroused, and responds fully.

He does not distinguish clearly between reality and fantasy.

He perceives and absorbs ideas much more slowly than adults.

He is concerned about finding acceptable ways of expressing aggression.

He is intrigued by the age-levels just ahead, rejects those behind.

He has limited conceptual development, is vague in his understanding of space, time, history, cause and effect.

He has little interest and understanding of adult problems regarding jobs, work, finance, marriage.

He has a limited sense of social responsibility and ethical behavior.

On Children's Programs

TO HAVE	TO AVOID
A Master of Ceremony who	
can project warmth and sincerity	is an effeminate man or masculine woman
can be himself	is sarcastic, patronizing, or talks down to children
has masculine or feminine appeal paternal or maternal older, knowledgeable friend	is sophisticated, high pressure, rapid speaker
	attempts role-taking that is obviously false
appears low pressure — moves at a slow pace within children's attention span	sounds like the announcer of commercials in his speech
has previous experience working with children	
Child Performers who are	
at ease, natural, relaxed in appearance	uncomfortable or afraid
average or above average in ability, but not markedly superior. (Each child thinks of himself as being slightly better than he is.)	child geniuses or show-offs or too obviously coached by their parents or who are mothers' puppets
child actors if they can still be children	exploited by the emcee to appear better than they are, made to look ridiculous, made the butt of jokes
unsophisticated if the emcee or an aide can relax them or put them at ease by a preliminary warm-up discussion	inept amateurs
asked open-ended questions about activities which the emcee knows to exist by virtue of the warm-up discussion. Open-ended questions create much more depth of the child for the benefit of the audience	asked yes-or-no questions during introductions because it fails to create any appeal or identification in the viewing audience
Fan Clubs which	
result in constructive activity such as submitting art or craft work, finishing partly told stories, provide outside group participation	in the studio audience become the object of ridicule or made to respond in a ridiculous fashion in order to create the enthusiastic audience impression
present good amateur performers	provide for no participation by members
	present unskilled fans

Of the Foundation for Character Education

TRUSTEES

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THE FOUNDATION for Character Education was established in bequest by Solomon Agoos. The Trustees whom he designated were granted wide discretion in using the bequest for Mr. Agoos made only three stipulations defining the purposes of the Foundation and its activities: (1) they must involve popular education, (2) they must be related to the activity of individuals, particularly children in the kindergarten to grade six, and (3) they must be concerned with moral values.

The problem of the education of children with respect to moral values is in the translation of sets of principles into ways of behaving. Too often "character education" as such has consisted mainly of an education in words rather than in deeds.

Each society determines for itself the good, the right, and the ideal, both as to the goals for which men strive and the behavior they adopt in achieving their goals. Character is represented by that which an individual stands for, believes in and defends, that which he strives for, and particularly the means he adopts to achieve his ends.

Character education is the process by which an individual acquires the values, beliefs, attitudes, and ways of acting that are socially beneficial. Its goal is individuals who lead lives which provide for the fullest personal and social development.

The Trustees of the Foundation for Character Education establish as its purpose the encouraging of those aspects or processes of our society which promote socially desirable values, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior, and discouraging those which are socially undesirable. This broad definition of purpose is adopted in order to avoid the espousal of a particular or sectarian cause. In our society all of the values are not mutually consistent with each other. Children and adults are continually forced to make moral choices between conflicting loyalties, special and general privilege, and personal versus mutual satisfaction. The Trustees can only hope that any projects undertaken will increase the ability of children to make wiser judgments.

In determining on a course of action, the Trustees recognize that the process by which character is acquired is both subtle and gradual. Five major influences contribute to children's character education: 1) The Family, 2) Other Children, 3) The School, 4) Mass Media, 5) The Church.

In spite of the magnitude of these influences when compared with the resources of the Foundation, the Trustees believe that any grants which enhance the operation of these influences or provide needed information regarding their operation with respect to character development of children satisfy the terms of the bequest establishing the Foundation for Character Education.

Of the five influences listed, the Schools and Mass Media appear as the more amenable to our approach especially because in these areas comparatively few individuals influence large numbers of children over long periods of time.

NEXT ISSUE

December, 1957. ***Speaking Vocabulary of Primary Grade Children*** **by Helen A. Murphy.**

A summary of a series of Boston University research studies and listing the spontaneous speaking vocabulary of K-3 children.

PREVIOUS NUMBERS AVAILABLE

April, 1957. ***Guidance for the Classroom Teacher*** **by Dugald S. Arbuckle. Postpaid, $1.00.**

Concerned with the teacher's specific functions in the testing and group work aspects of an over-all guidance program.

February, 1957. ***Can We Help Children to Write?*** **by B. Alice Crossley. Postpaid, $1.00.**

A discussion of techniques for helping children to write, beginning with the transition from oral to written work at the primary level.

December, 1956. ***High Interest-Low Vocabulary Reading Materials*** **(a selected booklist) by Helen Blair Sullivan and Lorraine E. Tolman. Postpaid, $1.00.**

Over one thousand books annotated and categorized for use at the elementary and junior high levels.

October, 1956. ***Methods of Developing the Speaking Voice in the Elementary Schools*** **by Wilbert L. Pronovost. Postpaid, $1.00.**

Very practical help for any teacher who wishes to develop better quality in the voices of the children whom he teaches.

April, 1956. ***Forecasting Juvenile Delinquency*** **by William C. Kvaraceus. Postpaid, $1.00.**

Extensive consideration of two promising devices now available to professional workers concerned with the prevention and control of juvenile delinquency.

February, 1956. ***Classroom Enrichment Through Pupil Specialties*** **by Donald D. Durrell and Leonard J. Savignano. Postpaid, $1.00.**

A report on how four hundred intermediate grade children followed specialties as a part of their school program.

December, 1955. ***Adjusting to Individual Differences in English*** **by Olive S. Niles and Margaret J. Early. Postpaid, $1.00.**

Ways of adapting the teaching of reading, writing, and listening to individual differences in secondary school English classes.